

willing to step up and take it. Understandably, they want to know that they and their loved ones will be taken care of in case something goes wrong. It is not a lot to ask, but they do not at this moment have that assurance, and these recent tragic cases show that their concerns are not unfounded.

The bottom line remains that we must pass a fair compensation plan in order to make the smallpox vaccine program more attractive and palliative to those who are asked to be first responders and to take this protection. That is the goal of all of us in the House today.

The Institute of Medicine has reported that the absence of such a plan is a major barrier to an effective vaccine program; but the bill that is on the floor today is not going to give nurses, firefighters, and other first responders the assurances that they need to be vaccinated. It imposes unfair caps on lost wage reimbursements. It does not guarantee that the promises in the bill will be funded. And it will not work.

First responders in our communities have spoken clearly. In fact, a few hours ago we stood together on Capitol Hill as they told us what plan will work. The House of Representatives needs to listen to these people. The nurses are my colleagues. I served with them on the front lines for over 2 decades in my community in Santa Barbara, California. They tell me that the House should reject this bill. We should pass this legislation that the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) and I have crafted with our colleagues and with our first responders' input, again, the goal being that the President wants our first responders to be prepared in the event of a smallpox attack, and we want to help them. But this bill and the efforts to block alternative proposals are simply making our nurses, our firefighters, and our other first responders feel even more uncomfortable about stepping up and volunteering to take this vaccine.

The bill before us today provides a \$262,000 lifetime cap at \$50,000 per year. This could perhaps in some instances last only 5 years. Consider this: as someone who perhaps is the bread earner for their family, perhaps the sole support for their children, who weighs this compensation package against the risks, albeit small, but if they are, they could be devastating, and to know that is the bottom line that is going to be offered under this legislation and with that no guarantee that the funding will be there year after year as more and more first responders are asked to take this extra step.

As a contrast, our alternative provides nurses and first responders with the confidence they need because it guarantees that the funding will be there for them. If it is a small number who are at risk, as the administration and as the Centers for Disease Control say, then we should be generous with these people. The alternative that we

had hoped to propose provides a compensation of up to \$75,000 per year, but with no lifetime cap, and this is the legislation that we ask that we be allowed to debate and vote on on the floor.

We ask that our colleagues reject the bill before us today and let us debate this measure in fairness to our first responders.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, let our trust be in Your mercy and not in ourselves. Fix our hope in Your love, not in our own strength or ability or human resources.

If we do not trust You, everything can lead to destruction, confusion and chaos. We will have only ourselves to blame. There will be nowhere to bury our failure or shame.

If we trust in You everything will become for us strength, inspiration, and be filled with meaning.

Everything will lead to another discovery of You in our midst and Your kingdom of peace and freedom at last.

Lord, do not let us deceive ourselves. Place our trust in You, now and forever. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced

that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 1307. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a special rule for members of the uniformed services in determining the exclusion of gain from the sale of a principal residence and to restore the tax exempt status of death gratuity payments to members of the uniformed services, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 95. Concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) "A concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. NICKLES, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. HOLLINGS, and Mr. SARBANES to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 330. An act to further the protection and recognition of veterans' memorials, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 30. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress to commend and express the gratitude of the United States to the nations participating with the United States in the Coalition to Disarm Iraq.

#### HONORING CHARLES T. COLE, JR.

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, no one has been more civically active in the Midlands of South Carolina than Charlie Cole, who was recently honored as the 2003 Ambassador of the Year by the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce.

Charlie Cole, who is the Regional President of Wachovia Bank, is passionate about business and community development. Charlie serves as chairman, on the board, or as a member of over a dozen community organizations.

Not content to just have his name on these committees, Charlie has taken an active leadership role, as he helped raise half a million dollars for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation over the past year.

Charlie is a retired lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserves, and a dedicated elder at Eastminster Presbyterian Church. His acts of generosity and kindness have